(a) whether it is a fact that the Secretary of State of America has reiterated the supremacy of the Hyde Act in the perspective of the Indo-American nuclear agreement;

(b) whether it is not against the assurance which was being given in the Parliament till now; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The US president while signing the Law approving the India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement on October 8, 2008, has stated that the Agreement is consistent with the Atomic Energy Act and other elements of US law.

Compensation for fatalities in UN peace keeping operations

1147. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:
SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of fatalities India has suffered in UN Peacekeeping Operations from 1948 to 2007;

(b) when was the first batch of Indian soldiers deputed for UN Peacekeeping Operations; and

(c) whether the families of soldiers laying their lives during such operations abroad, get additional compensation apart from the usual package admissible when the fatalities occur within India?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) As of 31st October, 2008, 119 Indian military and police personnel have died in UN Peacekeeping operations.

(b) Indian soldiers were first deputed for UN peacekeeping operations in the UN Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (UNNNRC) in Korea (1950-1953).

(c) The next of kin of military and police personnel losing their lives in UN peacekeeping operations are eligible for United Nations compensation which is not linked to compensation from any other source.

Fishermen attacked by Sri Lankan Navy

1148. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the innocent Indian fishermen are often attacked in mid-sea by Sri Lankan Navy and the atrocities and harassment of Sri Lankan Navy against the Indian fishermen are increasing day by day;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government of India is either indifferent to the issue or if at all taking action, it is only in name sake;

(c) whether Government would initiate action to cancel the Indo-Lankan Agreement signed in 1974 and 1976 unduly gifting 'Katchatheevu' to get a permanent solution to this problem; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There have been incidents of Indian fishermen allegedly fired upon by the Sri Lankan Navy. The Government has always taken up strongly such cases with the Government of Sri Lanka and emphasized the need for the Sri Lankan Navy to act with restraint and desist from firing on our fishermen. Sri Lankan Navy has denied responsibility in all instances. Keeping in mind the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions of the issue, the Government has reached an understanding with the Sri Lankan Government on 26th October 2008 to put in place practical arrangements to deal with bonafide Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). As part of these arrangements, there will be no firing on Indian fishing vessels will not tread into sensitive areas designated by the Government of Sri Lanka along its coastline.

(c) and (d) The Government of India considers its maritime boundary with Sri Lanka settled under the Agreements concluded with Sri Lanka in 1974 and 1976. Under the Agreements, the Island of katchatheevu lies on the Sri Lankan side of the India-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line. Both these Agreements were subsequently laid before Parliament.

Visit of US Secretary of State

1149. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US Secretary of State Ms. Condoleezza Rice visited the country, recently; and

(b) if so, the details of the bilateral and multilateral issues that figured in the talks with her and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Dr. Condoleezza Rice, US Secretary of State visited New Delhi on 4-5 October 2008. Secretary Rice met with External Affairs Minister and reviewed bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest and discussed the situation in the region. The two leaders noted that during the last few years, Indo-US relations has been considerably strengthened and intensified. Secretary Rice also called on Prime Minister and met with the Leader of Opposition.

Dr. Condoleezza Rice again visited New Delhi during 3-4 December 2008 to offer condolences for the victims of the Mumbai terror attack and express solidarity with India. She met with External Affairs Minister, Home Minister, Leader of Opposition and called on Prime Minister and conveyed the support of the US Government to India in its effort to fight terrorism.